



WELLNESS BOOKLET

Department of Human Resources and Risk Management

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FOR QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS BOOKLET, PLEASE CONTACT THE DEPARTMENT OF
HUMAN RESOURCES AND RISK MANAGEMENT

Disclaimer: This booklet is a summary of information from the Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield website “Time well spent.” It is not meant to provide medical advice on behalf of the City or to replace medical consultation from your healthcare providers. For additional information, you can visit the website at <http://timewellspent.anthem.com>. For any health-related questions or concerns, always consult your healthcare providers.

Acknowledgment: This booklet was developed by Elizabeth Jacobs, Benefits Manager, in conjunction with the staff of the Department of Human Resources and Risk Management.

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JANUARY

Fitness & Exercise

Keep exercise on your to-do list

We've all been taught from a young age to fit in a little regular exercise. You know it's good for both your body and your mind. But when your day gets busy, it's too easy to skip. When you get out of the daily habit, it's hard to pick it back up. It's true, there are real road blocks to exercising, and lack of time is just one of them. But you can get through these road blocks and exercise into your day — at home or at the office.



Main ways to exercise

A well-balanced exercise program has three parts. Try to add a little of each to your exercise routine.

- **Aerobic activity** uses your large muscle groups and causes your body to use more oxygen. This kind of exercise is good for the heart, lungs and blood vessels. Brisk walking, jogging or running, and playing basketball are types of aerobic activities.
- **Resistance training**, also called strength training, firms your muscles and makes them stronger. It also helps your balance and movement. Resistance training involves moves like lunges, chest presses and bicep curls.
- **Flexibility exercises** stretch and lengthen your muscles. They also help keep your joints limber. Yoga is just one way to stay flexible.

Working out at home

You don't need much to workout in your home — just some floor space and a few items. Here are a few tips:

- *For strength training:* Use a set of dumbbells, resistance bands, kettlebells or even your own body weight.
- *For resistance training:* You don't need equipment to do exercises like pushups and crunches — just yourself. Keep a focus on changing up your routine. For training ideas, search online for at-home workouts.
- *For aerobic activity:* Try walking, jogging, running, riding a bike, playing tennis, swimming laps or playing basketball.
- *For turnkey workouts:* Try an app like Sworkit, which lets you customize and play video workouts on your mobile device. It's easy to work out anywhere at home.

You might even find yourself exercising while doing everyday household tasks.

Your office workout

If you work in an office, you might sit for hours on the phone or in meetings. Luckily, staying active at the office is only a matter of doing small bouts of exercise throughout the day. You may not be able to work out a full half-hour, but all your small steps add up.

While on the job, try:

- Using the stairs instead of the elevator.
- Walking to your co-worker's office instead of emailing or phoning.
- Walking to the break room and back.
- Using the stairs to the bathroom one flight up.
- Looking away from the screen every 30 minutes or so to stretch. Roll your shoulders, arch your back, stand up and stretch your legs.
- Walking at the airport while on a trip for work. Or if you're driving, pull off at a park or a rest stop and take a five-minute walk.

Before and after work try:

- Parking far away from the front door.
- Looking for a spot at your job where you can walk at lunch, during breaks or after work.
- Bringing exercise clothes with you, so you can walk or jog nearby.

What's your reason for not working out? Below are some excuses — and ways to beat them:

Problem: With work, family and other demands, I'm too busy to exercise.

Answer: Make staying active a priority each day. Carve time out of your day. Try before or after work, or on your lunch hour. Then put it in your day planner.

Problem: Using a treadmill or stationary bike is boring.

Answer: Try watching TV or listening to music while working out. Better yet, head outside for a walk or a bike ride, and bring a friend along.

Problem: I've never been an athlete.

Answer: You don't have to be an athlete to be active. Walking and hiking are great choices because they're easy, low-cost and no training is needed. The key to staying active isn't putting in long hours at the gym. It's about making the most out of the everyday things you do.

Why exercise?

Seven benefits of regular physical activity:

1. Weight management
2. Combat health conditions and diseases
3. Improve your mood
4. Boost energy levels
5. Better quality sleep
6. Improve physical intimacy
7. It can be fun and social

Choose your move

Easier activities

- Easy trail hike
- Light gardening
- Dancing
- Playing golf
- Bicycling at a leisurely pace
- Walking 10 to 20 minutes
- Swimming

Harder activities

- Running/jogging
- Bicycling quickly
- Walking a half hour or more
- Heavy yard work
- Basketball
- Jumping rope
- Soccer

10 Changes To Get More Exercise Every Day

- Do squats or lunges at your workstation and work your entire lower body
- Swap out your chair for an exercise ball
- Use the stairs instead of the elevator
- Park farther from the entrance to add some extra steps
- Add some incline to your flat treadmill workout to burn extra calories
- Try planks instead of crunches for a more complete core workout
- Break up your cardio with an interval workout
- Take a walk at lunch rather than sitting the whole time
- Try something new – take a different group exercise class with a friend



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FEBRUARY

Cost-of-Care

Need a doctor – and no surprises?

Use Care & Cost Finder

Life happens. When it does, we've got your back.

There's a lot to think about when you need care. Things like the best place to go and what's covered by your benefits. Care & Cost Finder helps you put an end to the guesswork.

Find a doctor, check quality and compare costs all in one place — online or on the go!

You can search for doctors, hospitals and other health care providers in your plan at anthem.com or with the Anthem Anywhere mobile app. You'll get important facts like office location, services provided, gender, languages spoken, patient ratings and if providers have received awards for high-quality care.

Care & Cost Finder includes costs for different kinds of care. You can compare doctors and costs side by side and get an estimate of what you'll pay based on your benefits.

It's easy to find, easy to use — and all in one place.



Ready to start using Care & Cost Finder?

Just register or log in to anthem.com today. Use the Anthem Anywhere app to get the same great information when you're on the go.

Find the right doctor for you

Tips to help you in your search

Whether you go to the doctor rarely or often, you should like and trust yours. After all, your primary care doctor is the one who will know you and your health best and refer you to other doctors when you need more specialized care. So, having a good relationship is key. Here are a few tips to help in your search for a doctor:

Make sure your doctor is part of your plan. You'll pay less out of pocket for your visits and usually preventive care will be covered at 100% when you see a doctor in your health plan.

Find a doctor that meets your needs. There are several different types of doctor that can act as primary care doctors.

- **Family practice** — They offer a wide range of care, from checkups to pregnancy care. This type of doctor might be a good choice if you want to keep all your family “under one roof.” A doctor who treats everyone in a family can get a better view of each person’s health.
- **Internal medicine** — Internal medicine doctors offer a range of care, including preventive care. But they may have special knowledge about certain health problems. So, if you have a long-term health concern, an internist who focuses on your problem may be a good fit for you.
- **General practice** — General practice doctors are like family practice doctors and can treat patients of any gender or age.

Ask for referrals. Talk to family and friends to see if they can recommend a doctor, they trust to you. Just make sure they're part of your health plan.

Plan ahead. Do you want a doctor located close to your home or office? On [anthem.com](https://www.anthem.com) you can search for doctors by location to make sure they're near you. You may also want to think about office hours, what hospital the doctor admits patients to, the languages they speak and if they use email or the internet to communicate with patients.



Finding a doctor

You can easily find a doctor in your plan by logging into [anthem.com](https://www.anthem.com) and using the Find a Doctor tool or downloading our mobile app. You can also find hospitals, labs and other health care professionals in your plan.

Getting ready for your first appointment

To make the most of your visit, gather some information about your health before you go. This can help both you and your doctor. Before your visit, write down:

- Your health history and your family's
- Any medicines you take, how much you take and how often (include vitamins and over-the-counter drugs)
- Concerns you have about your health

What to expect from a preventive care visit?

Most preventive exams start with a talk about your health history and any problems. Then you'll discuss things like:

- Medicines you take
- Your current eating habits and how to improve them
- How active you are — and whether you should be more active
- Stress in your life or signs of depression
- Screenings, tests or vaccines you may need based on your age and gender

Finding a good fit

It may take time to find a doctor you feel comfortable with. That's OK! You want to "click" with your doctor since regular checkups can help find problems before they start or early on, when your chances for treatment are better. If you're not happy with your first choice, you can usually change your primary care doctor anytime.

Need help?

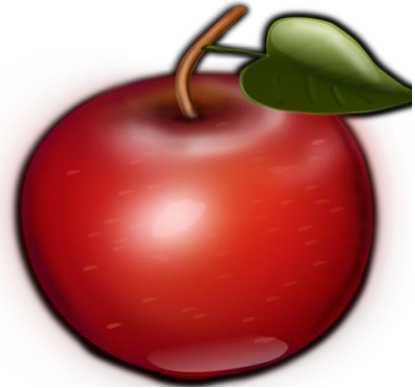
We're happy to connect you with a doctor, just call the Member Services number on your ID card.

MARCH

Weight Management

The facts about health fads

It's easy to be tempted by diet and fitness fads. They usually promise fast weight loss by restricting certain types of food or focusing on one type of exercise. But are these health gimmicks all they're cracked up to be? While some people report short-term benefits from diets and exercise fads, the perks don't usually stick. This is because they are often costly, not flexible, and hard to maintain over time.



Current trends: good, or too good to be true?

Here are the facts about some popular diet and fitness trends:

Very low carb (ketogenic) diet. Being careful with the type and amount of carbs (carbohydrates) you eat can be a healthy habit. Vegetables, fruits and many whole grains are types of carbs with a lower glycemic index (GI) that can help stabilize blood sugar levels, whereas simpler carbs like sweets, breads and white rice can spike it fast. People on this diet tend to avoid simple carbs and even some healthier options, like vegetables and fruits.

- Why it's popular: High-carb foods tend to be high-calorie. Therefore, cutting carbs leads to weight loss.¹
- Why you should be careful: Carbs are your body's main source of fuel, so this plan may cut out nutrients your body needs.² This diet is tough to maintain long term, so many people gain back the weight.³ Anyone with a health condition, like diabetes, should also work with his/her doctor on a balanced eating plan.

Quick fat loss gimmicks. Body wraps. Juice cleanses. Fat melting creams. Waist trimming belts. Weight loss pills and powders. These products promise big changes to your body in a short period of time.

- *Why it's popular:* It takes very little effort to use these products. They're also easy to get.
- *Why you should be careful:* Most of these fat-loss methods aren't medically sound and can be unsafe to use. In fact, most diet supplements aren't regulated by the Food and Drug Administration. Anything you put on your skin or swallow could potentially cause reactions that range from uncomfortable to life threatening

Meal replacements. This involves replacing meals with packaged drinks, food bars, or ready-meals that are designed for weight loss.

- *Why it's popular:* With packaged meals, you know exactly how many calories and nutrients are in your food. Meals require little to no preparation.
- *Why you should be careful:* Products from some brands may be less healthy than others, so it's important to read the nutrition labels. Some can contain as much sugar as eating a candy bar. Others can be packed full of sodium (salt). These foods can also be costly, which makes sticking to this diet challenging.

Is it a fad?

Health fads come and go, but the tell-tale signs are usually the same. If you're wondering whether your diet or fitness plan might be a fad, ask yourself:

- Does it completely restrict certain foods or activities?
- Does it promise extreme weight loss in a very short time?
- Does it label certain foods or activities as "good" or "bad"?
- Do you have to buy products from a specific brand in order to follow it?

If you answered "yes" to any of these questions, it may be a health fad.

Healthy lifestyle plans that work

When it comes to diet and exercise, one size does not fit all. However, if you follow these safe, tried-and-true basics, you'll be on the path to looking and feeling your best.

Plan your plate. Every person's nutrition needs are a little different. A good starting point is to aim for balanced meals that include whole grains, fruits, lean protein, a variety of colorful vegetables, and plenty of water.

Move more. Whether it's walking, running, or dancing, experts recommend 150 minutes per week of activity. Exercise helps your body burn calories and improves your heart health.⁷ And remember to focus on strength training at least twice each week. Things like lifting weights and other forms of resistance exercise help maintain muscle mass and can help prevent injuries.

Set realistic goals. Make sure you set goals that are in reach. Aim to make a plan that you can stick to long term.⁸ If you want to lose weight, aim for one pound a week as a safe, healthier, achievable goal. Also, as you track your weight loss, don't get too hung up on the number on the scale. If your clothes are fitting better, that's also a good sign that you're getting to your goal.

Talk to your doctor. Always talk to your healthcare team before starting any new diet or exercise plan. Many factors can impact your health, such as your medical history and any medicines you take. Your doctor can help you figure out the best plan for your health goals.

Live. Life. Healthy



APRIL

Mental Health & Mindfulness

Mindfulness over matter

Combatting stress through self-awareness

No matter who you are, stress is most likely a part of your life. The key is learning how to identify it and manage it. Many doctors are pointing to mindfulness as a method for successfully controlling stress before it controls you.

What are the warning signs of stress?

The warning signs of stress aren't something to take lightly. They are signs that your body and mind need extra care. These signs include:

- Headaches, muscle tension, neck or back pain
- Upset stomach
- Dry mouth
- Chest pains, rapid heartbeat
- Difficulty falling or staying asleep
- Fatigue
- Loss of appetite or overeating "comfort foods"
- Increased frequency of colds
- Lack of concentration or focus, memory problems or forgetfulness
- Jitters
- Irritability or short temper
- Anxiety

Grab a mobile device and breathe deeply

If you have a smartphone or mobile device, there are several free apps that can help you in your mission to be more mindful.

Search **mindfulness** in your app store

Ways to reduce stress

Guided imagery: relaxation, aided by imagination. Guided imagery uses words and music to help guide your imagination toward a relaxed, focused state. An instructor, tapes or scripts can help you through this process. You can use guided imagery to imagine a safe, comfortable place, like a beautiful beach or country road — a place where stress is not top of mind.

Deep breathing: one of the best ways to lower stress in the body. When you breathe deeply, taking slow deep breaths, it sends a message to your brain to calm down and relax. The brain then sends this message to your body. Relaxation combats the symptoms of stress, such as an increased heart rate, fast breathing and a rise in blood pressure.

Mindfulness: focus on the here and now. Mindfulness is a mental state achieved by focusing your attention on the present, and what you are sensing at that moment. By focusing on the here and now, you are less likely to get caught up in worries about the future or regrets over the past. Mindfulness is often learned through meditation, which is a method of controlling your attention by focusing on your breathing, a phrase or an image. The key to mindfulness is allowing thoughts to come and go without judging them.

How to practice mindful meditation

Most mindful meditation is done seated. One way to practice it is through a mental “body scan.” To do this:



- Sit up straight in a chair with both feet on the floor and your hands on your thighs.
- Close your eyes.
- Pay attention to your breath as you inhale and exhale.
- Focus on your forehead, then the bridge of your nose, your cheeks, and so on down your body until you reach your toes.
- As you “travel” down your body, focus only on the sensations in one part of the body and let all other thoughts go.

Are you getting enough sleep?

According to the American Academy of Sleep Medicine, more than 70 million Americans have a sleep disorder, and most are completely unaware that they could be getting better sleep. Inadequate sleep can cause impaired memory and thought processes, depression, increased perception of pain and decreased immune response.

Sleep also seems to affect weight, as your body responds to a lack of sleep by craving more fuel, particularly foods high in fat and carbohydrates. A 2004 study showed that people who slept less than six hours per night were almost 30% more likely to become obese than those who slept more.

While the necessary amount of sleep varies from person to person, most adults need seven to eight hours a day. However, some people may need as few as five or as many as 10, and pregnant women in their first trimester often need several more hours of sleep each day than they did before getting pregnant.⁴ If you feel drowsy during the day, even when you are bored, you haven't had enough sleep.

Sleep and work

While many of us wear our sleep deprivation as a badge of honor, the lack of importance our society places on sleep is having serious effects. A study published in the January 2010 issue of the Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine found that annual fatigue-related productivity costs came to about \$1,967 per employee. Those who weren't getting enough sleep were significantly less productive, performed worse and had more accidents on the job than workers who were getting adequate rest.⁵

Common treatments

If you aren't getting enough sleep, speak with your doctor. There are many treatments available to help you, including:

- *Bright light therapy*. Spending even a short amount of time each day in front of very bright lights can help to reset your internal clock. The time of day and type of light therapy depends on the sleep problem you have.
- *Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT)*. Relaxation training and biofeedback, stimulus control, sleep restriction, cognitive control and psychotherapy are treatments typically used for insomnia. These therapies address the underlying cause of your sleep problem.
- *Continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP)*. This treatment for obstructive sleep apnea involves wearing a mask that blows air into the back of your throat while you sleep to keep the airway open.
- *Oral appliances*. Mouth guards like those worn for sports can protect your teeth if you grind them in your sleep. They can also help with snoring and obstructive sleep apnea.
- *Medications or nutritional supplements*. Medications are available to treat many sleep problems, and certain nutritional supplements may offer some benefit as well.
- *Surgery*. Some sleep problems, such as obstructive sleep apnea, may require surgery.

Understanding Depression

Get the facts about depression

More than one in every 20 adults in the U.S. suffers from depression each year. Ongoing sadness and loss of interest in life are symptoms of depression. Unlike normal sadness or grief, depression won't go away on its own. If you have depression, you can't just "snap out of it." Without help, depression can go on for months or years, and it can be life-threatening.

Five causes of depression

- **Brain chemistry.** Researchers believe an imbalance of chemicals in your brain may cause depression.
- **Genetics.** Having a close family member with depression might increase your risk.
- **Environment.** Difficult life circumstances – like being exposed to violence or living in poverty – can make you more likely to have depression.
- **Illness.** Depression can be a symptom of another illness. Talking to a doctor is important to rule out other health problems.
- **Stress.** Stress and depression often go together. A job loss, money problems, a breakup or the loss of a loved one can all trigger depression. Even happy changes – like a new baby or a promotion at work – can cause enough stress to create major depression.

How do I know if I'm depressed?

You could be depressed if you have any of these feelings:

- Sadness or anxiety that won't go away
- Feeling hopeless or guilty for no reason
- Loss of interest in favorite activities
- Low energy
- Problems concentrating, remembering or making decisions
- Trouble sleeping, waking too early or oversleeping
- Eating too much or not wanting to eat
- Thoughts of death or suicide
- Wanting to avoid other people, including friends and family
- Health problems like headaches, stomach issues, and chronic pain

How can I help someone with depression?

- Help them get treatment. Someone who's depressed often feels too overwhelmed to get help. You may need to schedule appointments or remind your loved one to take medication on time.
- Offer support. Listen carefully to your loved one. Try to get them interested in things they used to enjoy.
- Be patient. Remember that your loved one is not trying to get attention. They're in real pain.

Five ways to beat depression

- **Ask for help.** Reach out to a doctor or a trusted friend or family member. Depression won't go away by itself, so it's important to get professional help.
- **Set realistic goals.** Break big tasks into smaller ones so you feel less overwhelmed.
- **Spend time with loved ones.** You might feel like hiding from the world but being alone can make depression worse. Spend time with people you care about.
- **Avoid making big decisions.** Depression can cloud your thinking. Discuss any big changes with people who know you well.
- **Be patient with yourself.** Remind yourself to take it one day at a time. With time and treatment, you'll feel like yourself again.



To get support for yourself or someone else who is struggling with depression, call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 800-273-8255 (TALK). If someone is suicidal, call 911 right away

How to reduce family stress

Work deadlines are looming. The kids have soccer practice — at the same time, but in different places. They have homework and projects due. Your parents asked you to come over to help with yard work...it goes on and on.

If you're like most families, you face stress every day. But by taking a few steps, you can prevent, detect and manage stress for a happier and healthier family life.



What's stress anyway?

Stress involves life's demands and how you meet them. Your job, family problems, health, outlook on life, finances and social network — they all can produce stress. When life's demands are greater than what you can handle, you start to feel stressed. The way you feel when you're stressed — low energy, headaches, upset stomach, rapid heartbeat — is the same way your body responds to danger and aggression.

When stress lasts for weeks or longer, it can hurt your health. Hormones released when you're stressed can disrupt your whole body, increasing your risk for heart disease, obesity, digestive problems, memory impairment, insomnia and depression, among other things.

Tips for helping your child manage stress:

- Provide a safe, consistent and dependable home.
- Be selective in TV viewing.
- Spend calm, relaxed time with your child or children.
- Encourage your children to talk and express concerns.
- Set aside time for physical activity.
- Build your children's feelings of self-worth.
- Allow your children opportunities to make choices and have some control of their lives.
- Seek professional guidance when signs of stress seem unmanageable.

Children can feel stress, too.

Stress isn't just for adults. Many children experience a level of stress that interferes with life, activities and health. Parents should watch the following signs:

- Physical stress symptoms in children can include changes in eating habits, headaches, new or recurrent bedwetting, nightmares and other sleep disturbances, stuttering and stomach problems.
- Emotional symptoms include anxiety, excessive worrying, the inability to relax, new or recurring fears, clinginess, questioning, anger, crying, an inability to control emotions, and aggressive or stubborn behavior.

Managing your stress as a parent

We'll always have some stress in our lives, but there are steps you can take to keep it under control.

- *Make sure you take care of yourself.* Eat healthy snacks and meals, exercise and make sure you get enough sleep. Spend time doing things you enjoy.
- *Lean on your support system.* Talk things through with friends and family members who can be positive.
- *Set limits.* Say no if you or your kids can't do something. Be nice, but firm.
- *Ask for help.* Don't be afraid to get help from a health care professional if your stress levels are too high. Sometimes other health problems have symptoms similar to stress, so it's important to make sure your symptoms aren't a sign of something else.

Try these quick stress relievers.

You don't need a week at a spa or retreat. Just spend 15 minutes or less trying one of these stress management techniques.

1. Meditate.
2. Breathe deeply for five minutes.
3. Take in your surroundings -- how the air feels on your face, how your feet feel hitting the ground.
4. Talk to a loved one.
5. Relax all your muscles, from head to toe.
6. Place a warm heat wrap around your neck and shoulders for 10 minutes.
7. Laugh out loud.
8. Listen to music.
9. Exercise.
10. Practice "gratitude." Make a list of things you are thankful for.

MAY

Women's Health

Staying on top of your health game

Regular preventive breast exams can spot problems early and save lives



It's too easy to put off your health screenings when you're busy. But breast exams should be a part of every 1 woman's wellness plan — even if you don't have a family history of breast cancer. Regular checks can help 2 find breast cancer early, when it is easier to treat — and beat.

Protect yourself

- **Be aware of the signs and symptoms.** A lump, swelling, pain, discharge, or skin changes are signs that should be checked by a doctor.
- **Talk with your doctor.** Ask when to start having mammograms and how often you should have one based on your health history. A mammogram is an X-ray of the breast tissue, using very low levels of radiation.

Have you had a mammogram recently?

A mammogram is a low-dose X-ray picture of the breast. The amount of radiation used during the test is very low, so the risk of any harm is extremely small.

This test is very important because it can help your doctor find breast cancer at an early stage when it can best be treated.

What happens during a mammogram?

- A technician uses a machine to take a few pictures of your breasts by placing each breast between two X-ray panels.
- The panels will push your breast closer between the panels to get a clear picture.
- Each X-ray picture takes less than one minute.

Who should get one?

It's important to know that 70-80% of breast cancers occur in women who have no family history of breast cancer. And the chance of getting it is greater as you age. So, discuss your family history with your health care professional. You might need to get a mammogram at an earlier age if you have a family history or personal history of breast cancer or other breast problems. Your health care professional can help you figure out when you should start having yours.

Get screened

Survival rates for breast cancer are very high — especially when it's caught early. The five-year survival rate for breast cancer in stages 0, 1, or 2 is between 93% and 100%.



Ovarian cancer



Ovarian cancer is cancer that starts in a woman's ovaries — the almond-sized organs in the lower abdomen that produce eggs and hormones. When ovarian cancer is found early, about 94% of women can beat it. But many times, it isn't found until it has spread. That's why it is important to know the risk factors, signs and symptoms, and pay attention to your body.

Know your risk

Some types of ovarian cancer seem to run in families. If a woman in your family has had ovarian or breast cancer, make sure your doctor knows. Other things that seem to make a woman more likely to develop ovarian cancer are:

- **Age.** Ovarian cancer is most often found after menopause, in women 63 or older. It is relatively rare in women under 40.
- **Weight.** Women who are obese are at greater risk.
- **Reproductive history.** Your risk is higher if you:
 - Started having your period before you were 12.
 - Went through menopause after 50.
 - Never had a full-term pregnancy, or if you started having children after age 35.
 - Took certain medicines to help you get pregnant.
 - Used hormone therapy during menopause. Your risk is lower if you:
 - Had a full-term pregnancy before you were 26.
 - Have had babies. Every full-term pregnancy lowers your risk.
 - Breastfed your babies.
 - Took certain birth control medicines.

Talk with your doctor about your health history and risk factors.

Helpful resources

To learn more about ovarian cancer, visit WebMD's Ovarian Cancer Health Center at webmd.com. You can also find information and support for women facing cancer of the reproductive organs at wcn.org, the Women's Cancer Network

Early treatment can save your life

Right now, there aren't any good screening tests for ovarian cancer. It can cause symptoms even in the 2 early stages, but the same symptoms can often be caused by other, less serious problems. The difference is that they:

- 1) Start suddenly.
- 2) Feel different than normal digestive or menstrual problems.
- 3) Happen almost every day and don't go away.

If you have any of the following symptoms almost daily for more than two or three weeks, make an appointment with your primary care physician or gynecologist right away. The sooner a diagnosis is made, the better your chances.

- 1) Bloating
- 2) Pain in your pelvis or belly
- 3) Trouble eating or feeling full quickly
- 4) Feeling an urgent need to urinate or needing to go more often

Other symptoms can include fatigue, indigestion, back pain, constipation, pain during sex and changes in your menstrual cycle.

Support for women with ovarian cancer

SHARE, a self-help group for women with breast or ovarian cancer, operates a toll-free hotline for women who have just been diagnosed. Dial 844-ASK-SHARE to speak with a cancer survivor to get support and advice for dealing with your diagnosis. Visit the group online at sharecancersupport.org.

Visit anthem.com for more ways to get healthy — and stay healthy.

Did you know?

The more periods a woman has, the more likely she is to develop ovarian cancer. Women who started their periods before age 12, started menopause after 50, never had babies and didn't breastfeed are at a higher risk



JUNE

Men's Health

Gentlemen,
rev up your
engines!



When it comes to fine-tuning your health, put yourself in the driver's seat. Eat right, stay active and get regular checkups, screenings and shots to make sure you stay running as smooth as your wheels.

Choose the right fuel

Your body needs the right fuel to stay in great shape. Here are some easy-to-follow heart-healthy tips:

- Add more omega-3 fatty acids, which are essential fatty acids your body needs to work normally. Include them easily by consuming foods like fish, almonds and flax seeds.
- Limit your sugar intake and cut out processed foods and soft drinks.
- Eat at least two cups of fruit and three cups of vegetables daily.
- Stay active for better overall health.

Get your tune up

Tune ups are essential to your car, and checkups are essential for you. Here are a few things you can do to prevent health issues:

- Schedule preventive checkups.
- Know your family history.
- Get regular cancer screenings.
- Don't smoke.
- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Exercise regularly – aim for 30 minutes, five days a week.

Visit anthem.com for more ways to get healthy and stay healthy.

Know the facts on prostate cancer

When it's caught early, prostate cancer can be cured.

Prostate cancer is the most common non-skin cancer in American men. But it grows slowly, and most men can beat it, with treatment.

Are you at risk for prostate cancer?

A lot of men with prostate cancer don't have symptoms until their cancer gets worse. That's why you should know your risks:

- **Age** – About three out of every five prostate cancers are found in men over 65.
- **Family history** – Men whose fathers or brothers have prostate cancer are twice as likely to have it.
- **Race** – Men of African descent are more likely to get prostate cancer than men of other races.
- **Weight** – Being very overweight can lead to a delay in finding the cancer, so it has more time to grow.
- **Diet** – Men who eat a lot of red meat and high-fat dairy and don't eat many fruits and vegetables have a higher risk of getting prostate cancer.

Getting checked for prostate cancer

Since most men don't have any symptoms, it is often found during a routine digital rectal exam (DRE). There is also a blood test, called the prostate specific antigen (PSA) test. It screens for raised levels of PSA, a protein made by the prostate.



Talk to your doctor about what screenings are right for you.

The guy's guide to preventive care

A helpful checklist



Getting certain preventive care tests and screenings and practicing healthy habits can help keep you at your healthy best. When you go for your next checkup, use this chart as a checklist to talk to your doctor about which tests you should get, when you should have them and how often.

Type of test	When to get it and why
Blood pressure reading	If you are age 18 to 40 and you aren't at higher risk for high blood pressure, it's recommended to get your blood pressure checked every 3 to 5 years. If you are age 40 or older, or if you are at higher risk for high blood pressure, get your blood pressure checked once a year.
Colon cancer screening (There are various types to be determined by your history and doctor)	If you are age 50 to 75, get tested regularly for colorectal cancer. You may need to get tested before age 50 if colorectal cancer runs in your family. There are different ways to test for colorectal cancer. Your doctor can help you decide which test you would prefer
Testing for Type 2 diabetes	If you are overweight or have other risk factors for Type 2 diabetes, like a family history of diabetes, ask your doctor to test you for diabetes.
Depression test	All adults older than 18 years should be routinely screened for depression. Screening for depression refers to medical professionals asking about symptoms of depression, even if their patients do not mention them. Depression symptoms include feeling sad, hopeless, tired, distracted, or not interested in activities that would normally interest you
Hepatitis C blood test	It's important for certain people to get tested for the hepatitis C virus. Everyone born between 1945 and 1965 need to be screened for the hepatitis C virus. If you have risk factors for hepatitis C – like any injection drug use or if you had a blood transfusion before 1992– check with your doctor if you need to get tested.
HIV testing	Get tested for HIV at least once. You may need to get tested more often depending on your risk
Chlamydia and gonorrhea testing	Talk with a doctor about getting tested if you are worried about chlamydia, gonorrhea, or other sexually transmitted disease.

Stay up-to-date with your shots

- Get a flu vaccine every year. The seasonal flu vaccine is the best way to protect yourself and others from the flu.
- Get the Tdap shot to protect against tetanus, diphtheria, and whooping cough (pertussis). Everyone needs to get the Tdap shot once.
- After you get a Tdap shot, get a Td shot every 10 years to keep you protected against tetanus and diphtheria.

If you are age 60 or older, get shots for older adults. Older adults need shots to protect against diseases like pneumonia and shingles.

Ask your doctor about medicines to prevent heart attacks and strokes

Statins are medicines that reduce the risk of heart attack and stroke by helping to lower or prevent high cholesterol. Statins are usually recommended for individuals' age 40 to 75 with high cholesterol, diabetes, high blood pressure, or who smoke when their doctor has decided they are at high risk for heart attack and stroke.

Statins aren't right for everyone, and all medicines have pros and cons. When you talk with your doctor about taking a statin, it's important to discuss your personal history as well as your risk for heart attack and stroke.

What about aspirin? Talk with your doctor about taking aspirin to prevent disease. Taking low-dose aspirin (or "baby aspirin") regularly can lower your risk for heart attack, stroke, and colorectal cancer. For most people, aspirin is safe. But it's not right for everyone.

Ask your doctor about taking aspirin regularly if you are age 50 to 59 and you have any of these risk factors for heart disease: smoking, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, or diabetes.

Other healthy habits to keep

- **Get help to quit.** If you smoke, ask your doctor about services to help you quit.
- **Eat a healthy diet.** If your doctor has told you that you are at risk for heart disease or diabetes, ask about dietary counseling. Focus on eating a healthy diet, including at least five servings of fruits and vegetables daily.
- **Watch your weight.** If you are overweight, ask your doctor about screening and counseling for obesity.
- **Drink alcohol in moderation.** If you choose to drink, have only a moderate (limited) amount. This means: no more than 2 drinks a day for men.

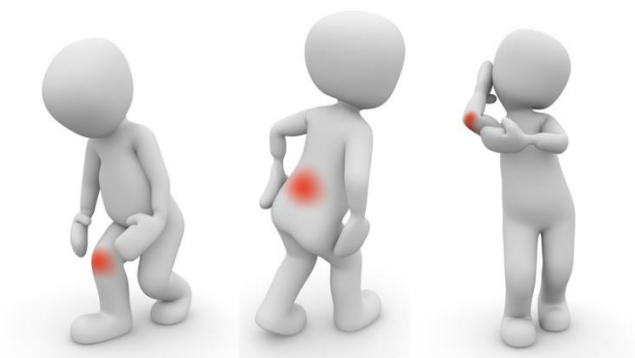
Always talk to your doctor to find out what tests or screenings are right for you.

JULY

Musculoskeletal Pain

What is Musculoskeletal Pain?

The causes of musculoskeletal pain are varied. Muscle tissue can be damaged with the wear and tear of daily activities. Trauma to an area (jerking movements, auto accidents, falls, fractures, sprains, dislocations, and direct blows to the muscle) also can cause musculoskeletal pain. Other causes of pain include postural strain, repetitive movements, overuse, and prolonged immobilization. Changes in posture or poor body mechanics may bring about spinal alignment problems and muscle shortening, therefore causing other muscles to be misused and become painful.



What Are the Symptoms of Musculoskeletal Pain?

People with musculoskeletal pain sometimes complain that their entire bodies ache. Their muscles may feel like they have been pulled or overworked. Sometimes, the muscles twitch or burn. Symptoms vary from person to person, but the common symptoms are:

- Pain
- Fatigue
- Sleep disturbances

How Is Musculoskeletal Pain Diagnosed?

Your doctor will conduct a thorough physical examination and medical history. In addition, your doctor may perform diagnostic studies to confirm the diagnosis.

How Is Musculoskeletal Pain Treated?

Different types of manual therapy, or mobilization, can be used to treat people with spinal alignment problems. For some acute musculoskeletal pain, these techniques have been shown to speed recovery.

Medications such as nonsteroidal anti-inflammatories (NSAIDs) may be used to treat inflammation or pain.

In patients with musculoskeletal disorders such as fibromyalgia, medications to increase the body's level of serotonin and norepinephrine (neurotransmitters that modulate sleep, pain, and immune system function) may be prescribed in low doses. Some of the medicines used to aid sleep include zolpidem (Ambien), eszopiclone (Lunesta), and ramelteon (Rozerem).

Other treatments may include:

- Injections with anesthetic or anti-inflammatory medications in or around the painful sites
- Exercise that includes muscle strengthening and stretching
- Physical or occupational therapy
- Acupuncture or acupressure
- Relaxation/biofeedback techniques
- Osteopathic manipulation (a whole system of evaluation and treatment designed to achieve and maintain health by restoring normal function to the body)
- Chiropractic care
- Therapeutic massage

For more information you can visit www.webmd.com

Back Pain

At some point, most of us will suffer from back pain. It can happen because of something as small as sleeping in a strange position. Or, it can be from something more serious like an accident or injury.

With 63% of Americans now overweight or obese, back pain is on the rise due to the strain of that excess weight on the body. Back pain is one of the most common reasons people visit a doctor or miss work.

How to avoid problems

- Exercise on a regular basis to increase muscle strength and balance. Add total body strength training; a strong core can prevent injury
- Use good posture and stay at a healthy body weight
- Eat a healthy diet with plenty of calcium and vitamin D to strengthen your spine. This also helps prevent osteoporosis (a thinning of bone tissue and loss of bone density over time)
- Be careful when lifting heavy objects. Be sure to support your back by keeping it straight when you do have to lift heavy objects and always lift with your leg muscles

- Don't smoke. Smoking restricts blood flow to the discs that cushion your vertebrae, lowers calcium absorption and prevents new bone growth
- Moderation! Don't be a weekend warrior with sports or overdo it with chores around the house
- Try to lower the stress in your life

When is back pain serious?

Most back pain goes away on its own with the right exercise and preventive steps, but some back pain may be a sign of other health problems. Be sure to talk to your doctor if:

- Pain goes down your leg below your knee
- Your leg, foot, groin or rectal area feels numb
- You have fever, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, weakness or sweating
- You lose control over going to the bathroom
- Your pain was caused by an injury
- Your pain is so intense you can't move around
- Your pain doesn't seem to be getting better after two to three weeks

Common causes of back pain

Injuries: Most causes of back pain are simple muscle or ligament strains and fractures that can cause short-term or long-term (chronic) pain. Strains are tears in the ligaments that support the spine. They can happen when you twist or lift the wrong way. Fractures can be caused by osteoporosis or from falls or other accidents.

Problems with your spine: A common problem that happens as we age is intervertebral disk degeneration. That's when the disks between the vertebrae break down and lose their cushioning ability. Other problems include muscle spasms, tension and ruptured or herniated disks.

Other health conditions: Scoliosis, arthritis, pregnancy, kidney stones or infections, endometriosis, osteoporosis and fibromyalgia can all cause back pain. Spinal stenosis, a narrowing of the spinal column, puts pressure on the spinal cord and nerves.

Food Choices to Help Ease Arthritis Pain

Many people claim that certain foods can reduce pain and joint inflammation. Growing evidence suggests that following a healthy diet and adding specific foods and spices could help.

Foods to Try

- Broccoli, Brussels sprouts and cabbage. These veggies are full of a compound called sulforaphane, which may help slow cartilage damage in joints due to osteoarthritis (OA). Other foods rich in sulforaphane include kale and cauliflower
- Fatty fish. Fatty fish like salmon, tuna, trout and mackerel are rich in omega-3 fatty acids, which help fight inflammation and boost heart health. Choose wild-caught fish whenever possible
- Garlic. Garlic is a member of the allium family, which also includes onions and leeks. These items contain a compound called diallyl disulfide that may help with a few diseases, including arthritis
- Tart cherries. The ingredient in cherries that helps with joint symptoms is the same one that gives this fruit its red color – anthocyanin. A recent study found that subjects who drank tart cherry juice experienced improvements in the pain and stiffness of OA
- Vitamin C. It's reported that people who take vitamin C supplements are 11 percent less likely to develop knee OA than those who don't take the supplements. (Note: avoid going above the recommended daily allowance of 65 to 85 milligrams, because in large doses vitamin C can increase the risk of kidney stones)

Foods to Avoid

Some people find that certain foods aggravate their arthritis

- For example, people have reported that eating foods in the nightshade family – such as eggplant, tomatoes, potatoes and most peppers – increases their pain, although studies haven't confirmed this
- Foods high in saturated and trans fats – such as red meat, fried food and packaged baked goods – should be avoided. They can lead to weight gain, which can make symptoms worse
- Avoid sugary sodas. A recent study revealed that OA of the knee tended to get worse in men who drank a lot of soda

Musculoskeletal Disorders & Exercise

Musculoskeletal Disorders or MSDs are injuries and disorders that affect the human body's movement or musculoskeletal system (i.e. muscles, tendons, ligaments, nerves, discs, blood vessels, etc.). Common MSDs include: Carpal Tunnel Syndrome, Tendonitis, Muscle / Tendon strain, Ligament Sprain, Tension Neck Syndrome etc.

Why it's important to exercise

The musculoskeletal system encompasses all the physical structures necessary for movement, including the bones, joints, muscles, ligaments and tendons.

Regular exercise, in combination with a healthy lifestyle, is the best way to keep all parts of the musculoskeletal system strong and healthy.

Things to remember:

Advice from a health care practitioner should be sought as soon as possible if your musculoskeletal pain:

- occurs after a traumatic event, such as a car accident or a fall
- causes wakening during the night
- regardless of the change in body position or movement pattern, pain does not reduce or change
- accompanies numbness, tingling, or 'pins and needles' in bottom, legs or feet
- accompanied changes to bowel or bladder control
- Avoid exercising alone or in abnormal conditions. With movement disorders the risk of falls is increased
- Conditions affecting the peripheral nerves can reduce pain symptoms, where pushing an exercise program too hard can result in an injury without receiving the neural feedback i.e. pain
- Allow 48 hours to recover from resistance training prior to the next session
- Foot and hand straps may be needed on bicycle and arm ergo machines to allow for adequate movement and control

Types of exercise recommended

Exercise Right recommends a combination of stretching, strengthening and improving posture through corrective movements and functional activities.

There are two phases to understanding musculoskeletal pain, firstly the need to understand the mechanism of the injury (what movement's cause pain), and secondly how to correct poor movement patterns.

Graduated training – the best medicine is to stay active and gradually start walking at a low-moderate pace. This will assist in maintaining not only aerobic capacity but assist with being able to complete activities of daily living.

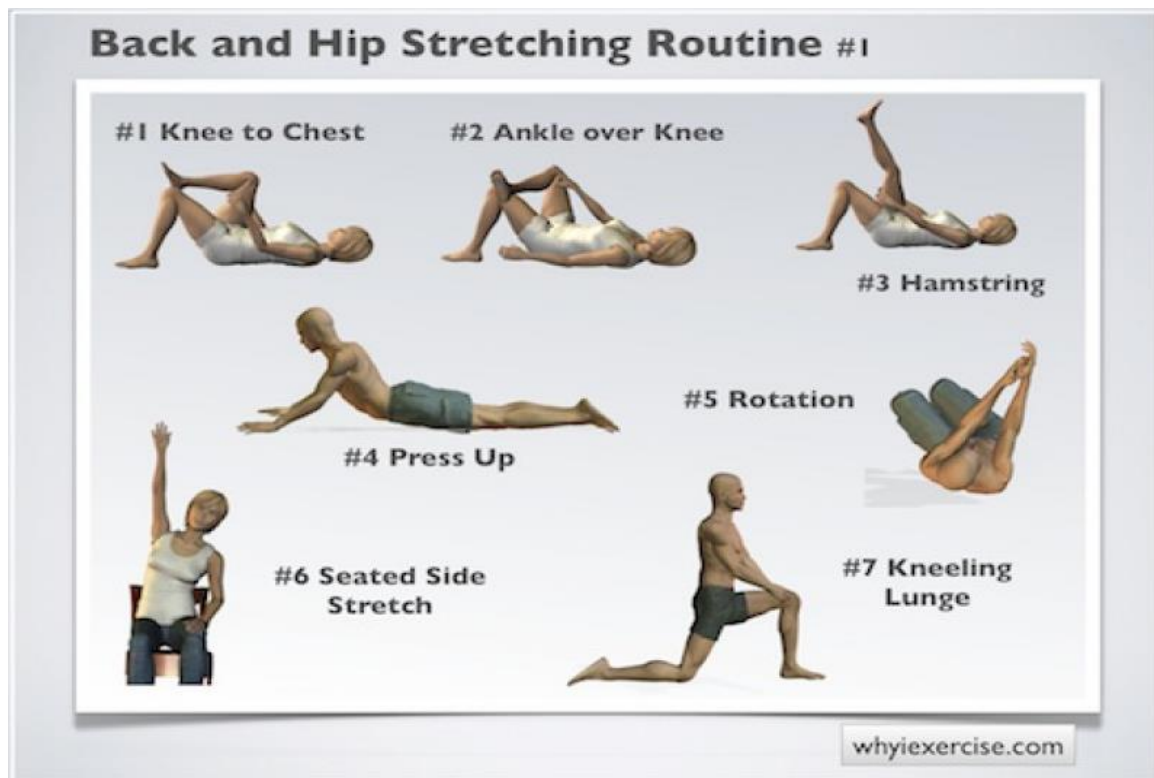
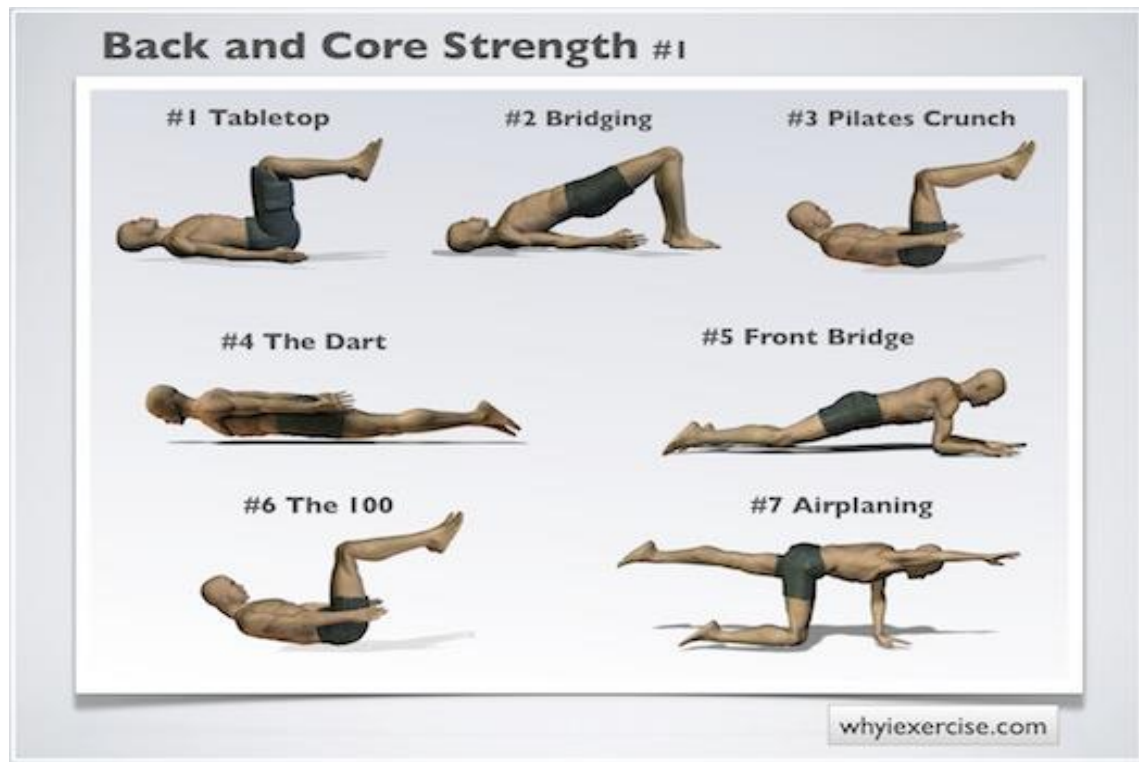
Postural correction – an accredited exercise professional will be able to provide simple cues and exercises to improve and maintain correct posture throughout day to day activities.

Strengthening – people with MSDs need to re-educate their body how to move without pain, therefore exercises catering in re-educating the body how to move correctly, is extremely important. Muscle strength, particularly in the small muscles that stabilize the lower back, does not return automatically when low back pain eases. To regain this strength, it may be required to begin with some specific strengthening exercises, with graduated difficulty to progressively increase strength.

Flexibility – along with strengthening exercises, stretching or flexibility training needs to be incorporated in the program to restore full range of movement and improve their ability to complete functional activities. Stretching of the tight muscles/structures should be completed daily.

Walking, swimming and cycling also allow people with MSDs to become active and stay active.

Stretches for Musculoskeletal Pain



AUGUST

Healthy Eating for Families

Ten ways to eat healthy on a budget

Eating well and saving more can be easier when you know when to shop and where to look.



Looking for ways to get more from your food budget? Eating healthy doesn't have to break the bank. These tips can help you shop smarter to get the most nutritious foods at a better price.

- **Stick to your list** — Taking inventory of the items you need before you shop and not deviating from your list can keep you from overbuying and overspending. Many grocery stores now offer online shopping which can be a great way to avoid impulse buying as you wander the aisles.
- **Clip coupons** — Search for savings on your favorite healthy products by entering “(Product Name) Coupons” online or by checking published weekly specials at your local market. Many brands also offer coupons if you sign up for their email list.
- **Look high and low** — Many stores stock pricier items at eye level. It pays to look for items on upper and lower shelves to find better deals, especially on store brands.
- **Shop locally grown** — Buying produce from your local farmers market can help you get the freshest, in-season items for less. Stock up during peak seasons and freeze your foods.
- **Buy in bulk** — Beans, cereals, grains, dried fruits, seeds, nuts in bulk can provide more servings at a lower cost. Check local discount warehouses or online markets for bulk deals.
- **Choose frozen vegetables** — Because they're harvested and frozen at their peak freshness, their nutrients are similar to fresh and they last longer.
- **Go meatless** — Replace meat a few times each week with lower cost, high nutrition proteins like eggs, lentils, black beans, kidney beans or quinoa.
- **Save on seafood** — Instead of fresh fish, buy canned tuna, salmon or sardines that are just as healthy and less expensive.
- **Can the cola** — Drink more water instead. Sodas, sports drinks and juices are high-cost, high-calorie items. A pitcher that filters tap water can cut down on beverage costs and provide gallons of drinking water with zero calories.
- **Plan meals** — Spend some time at the beginning of each week to meal plan. This can help you avoid takeout and help you build a grocery list. Remember to include plans for lunch!

Glycemic Index

What in the world is it? And why should it matter to you?

Let's start with how to pronounce this big word first. **Gly-see-mik**. It relates to the sugar (glucose) level in your blood. The glycemic index (GI) measures how high and how fast your blood sugar spikes after you eat a specific type and amount of food compared to consuming the same amount of pure sugar.

The carbohydrates in some foods (high GI foods), like white rice, bread and potatoes, can spike blood sugar higher and faster like sugar, whereas lower glycemic foods, like nuts, lentils and broccoli, have a slower, steadier effect. If a food has a 35 percent GI, like a serving of kidney beans, it means it boosts blood sugar only 35 percent as much as pure sugar does. Another food may have a 90 percent GI, like a serving of a flavored sports drink, which is high enough to act like pure sugar in the bloodstream.

How to gauge GI Values

Glycemic Index	Value	Foods with this GI value
Low GI	55 or less	Most fruits, most vegetables, beans, low- processed grains, nuts, low-fat dairy
Medium GI	56 – 69	White potatoes, sweet potatoes, corn, white rice, cereals (Cream of Wheat or wheat squares)
High GI	70+	White bread, rice cakes, most crackers, bagels, doughnuts, cakes, other sweets



Why GI matters

Left unchecked, high blood sugar can lead to serious health concerns like diabetes, heart disease and some cancers. Eating foods with low GI values can mean a slower rise in blood sugar, and help you control your weight and maintain better health. Foods with a lower GI value can help curb cravings for unhealthy foods and keep you feeling satisfied longer. If you are concerned about a health issue and how to prevent or manage it, work with your doctor on the right eating plan for you.

Simple swaps for better blood sugar

Swap this higher GI food	For this lower GI food
White rice	Brown rice
Oatmeal (flavored, instant)	Steel-cut oats with fresh fruit
Corn flakes	Bran flakes
Spaghetti	Vegetable noodles (Zoodles)
White bread	Whole grain bread
Corn	Peas, leafy greens, peppers, broccoli, cauliflower

Peanut butter and jelly smoothie

Using dates adds sweetness and nutrients to this quick snack



What's the swap? Instead of added sugar, go for a couple of dates. They give your smoothie the sweetness you crave, plus a dose of disease-fighting antioxidants and fiber. Dates are also packed with potassium, magnesium and vitamin B6.

Chew on this: Peanut butter gives you a rich amount of protein — keeping your belly satisfied. Yum!



Time-saving tip: Shortly soaking the dates in warm water cuts back on the blending time.

SEPTEMBER

Preventive Health

Preventing disease protects you and your community

You take care of yourself and you eat a balanced diet. But are you up to date on your vaccines? Even as an adult, health screenings and shots are just as important as exercise in helping you stay healthy. Why?

- Immunity from your childhood vaccine shot.
- Newer vaccines can help protect against causes cervical cancer.
- You may have missed some of your shots when you were a kid. Getting childhood illnesses as an adult can be even harder on your body.



The good news is that it isn't too late to catch up. Not only will you protect yourself and your family, but you could help to stop the spread of illness worldwide. And that's a battle worth fighting.

How vaccines work with your immune system

When you're sick, your body's immune system kicks in to fight off germs. Your immune system has a memory. It remembers what you've been exposed to before to help protect you the next time around. Some germs are so strong that they can overwhelm the immune system. That's where vaccines come into play. Because the germs in vaccines have been weakened or killed, they don't cause an illness. But they do cause your body to build up immunity. That helps you fight off the germs better. Vaccine-preventable diseases can be deadly without the vaccine's boost to your immune system.

Before we had vaccines, the only way to become immune to an illness was to get the illness. That could be serious — or even deadly. Being vaccinated is a way to build up immunity with less risk.

Why get vaccines?

When too few get immunized for a disease, it can still infect many people. Even though many serious diseases are no longer common in the U.S., this isn't true everywhere in the world. One person catching a disease, like measles, could lead to a whole community becoming infected, if most people in that community aren't immunized.

Are vaccines safe?

Some parents worry about vaccines. They question whether the benefits of getting a vaccine outweigh the risks of getting an illness — especially if they think their child's chances of getting that illness are low.

All medicines carry the risk of side effects, and vaccines are no exception. As with all drugs, no vaccine is 100% effective. However, vaccines go through lots of testing, and they're licensed by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration before they're used in this country. *For details about safety and testing, go to [cdc.gov/vaccines](https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines)*

Take care of yourself

Use your preventive care benefits

Getting regular checkups and exams can help you stay healthy and catch problems early when they're easier to treat.

That's why our health plans offer all the preventive care services and immunizations below — at no cost to you. If you see a doctor or use a pharmacy in the plan, you won't have to pay anything for these services and immunizations. If you want to visit a doctor or pharmacy outside the plan, you may have to pay out of pocket.

Not sure which services make sense for you? Talk to your doctor. He or she can help you figure out what you need.

Preventive vs. Diagnostic care

What's the difference? **Preventive care** helps protect you from getting sick. If your doctor recommends you have services even though you have no symptoms, that's preventive care. **Diagnostic care** is when you have symptoms and your doctor recommends services to determine what's causing those symptoms.

Adult preventive care

Screening tests:

- Alcohol misuse: related screening and behavioral counseling
- Aortic aneurysm screening (men who have smoked)
- Hepatitis C virus (HCV)
- Type 2 diabetes screening
- Eye chart test for vision
- Hearing screening
- Height, weight and body mass index (BMI)
- HIV screening and counseling
- Lung cancer screening for those ages 55-80 who have a history of smoking 30 packs per year and still smoke, or quit within the past 15 years
- Prostate cancer
- Sexually transmitted infections: related screening and counseling
- Tobacco use
- Tuberculosis screening

Immunizations:

- Diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis (whooping cough)
- Hepatitis A and hepatitis B
- Human papillomavirus (HPV)
- Influenza (flu) Measles, mumps and rubella (MMR)
- Meningococcal (meningitis)
- Pneumococcal (pneumonia)
- Varicella (chickenpox)

Women's preventive care:

- Well-woman visits
- Breast cancer, including exam and mammogram
- Breastfeeding: primary care intervention to promote breastfeeding support, supplies and counseling
- Contraceptive (birth control) counseling
- HPV screening
- Screening and counseling for interpersonal and domestic violence
- Pregnancy screenings, including gestational diabetes, hepatitis B, asymptomatic bacteriuria, Rh incompatibility, syphilis, HIV and depression
- Pelvic exam and Pap test, including screening for cervical cancer

Child Preventive Care

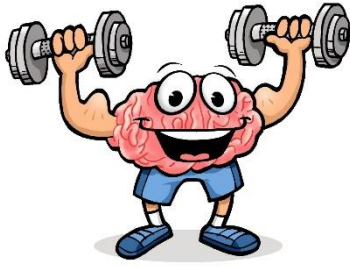
Screening tests:

- Blood pressure
- Cervical dysplasia screening
- Cholesterol and lipid level
- Depression screening
- Development and behavior screening
- Type 2 diabetes screening
- Hearing screening
- Height, weight and BMI
- Hemoglobin or hematocrit (blood count)
- Lead testing
- Newborn screening
- Screening and counseling for obesity
- Counseling for those ages 10–24 with fair skin about lowering their risk for skin cancer
- Oral (dental health) assessment when done as part of a preventive care visit
- Screening and counseling for sexually transmitted infections
- Vision screening when done as part of a preventive care visit

Immunizations:

- Chickenpox
- Flu
- Herophilus influenza type b (Hib)
- Hepatitis A and hepatitis B
- HPV
- Meningitis
- MMR
- Pneumonia
- Polio
- Rotavirus
- Whooping cough

These preventive care services are recommendations of the Affordable Care Act (ACA or health care reform law). They may not be right for every person, so ask your doctor what is right for you.



Physical Activity and Health

Regular physical activity is one of the most important things you can do for your health.

If you're not sure about becoming active or boosting your level of physical activity because you're afraid of getting hurt, the good news is that **moderate-intensity aerobic activity**, like brisk walking, is generally **safe for most people**.

Start slowly. Cardiac events, such as a heart attack, are rare during physical activity. But the risk does go up when you suddenly become much more active than usual. For example, you can put yourself at risk if you don't usually get much physical activity and then suddenly do vigorous-intensity aerobic activity, like shoveling snow. That's why it's important to start slowly and gradually increase your level of activity.

If you have a chronic health condition such as arthritis, diabetes, or heart disease, talk with your doctor to find out if your condition limits, in any way, your ability to be active. Then, work with your doctor to come up with a physical activity plan that matches your abilities. If your condition stops, you try to do only as much as you can. What's important is that you avoid being inactive. Even 60 minutes a week of moderate-intensity aerobic activity is good for you.

If you want to know more about how physical activity improves your health, the section below gives more detail on what research studies have found.

Control Your Weight

Looking to get to or stay at a healthy weight? Both diet and physical activity play a critical role in controlling your weight. You gain weight when the calories you burn, including those burned during physical activity, are less than the calories you eat or drink. For more information see our section on balancing calories. When it comes to weight management, people vary greatly in how much physical activity they need. You may need to be more active than others to achieve or maintain a healthy weight.

To maintain your weight: Work your way up to 150 minutes (2 hours and 30 minutes) of moderate-intensity aerobic activity, 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity aerobic activity, or an equivalent mix of the two each week. Strong scientific evidence shows that physical activity can help you maintain your weight over time. However, the exact amount of physical activity needed to do this is not clear since it varies greatly from person to person. It's possible that you may need to do more than the equivalent of 150 minutes of moderate-intensity activity a week to maintain your weight.

To lose weight and keep it off: You will need a high amount of physical activity unless you also adjust your diet and reduce the amount of calories you're eating and drinking. Getting to and staying at a healthy weight requires both regular physical activity and a healthy eating plan. The CDC has some great tools and information about nutrition, physical activity and weight loss.

Reduce Your Risk of Cardiovascular Disease

Heart disease and stroke are two of the leading causes of death in the United States. But following the Guidelines and getting at least 150 minutes a week (2 hours and 30 minutes) of moderate-intensity aerobic activity can put you at a lower risk for these diseases. You can reduce your risk even further with more physical activity. Regular physical activity can also lower your blood pressure and improve your cholesterol levels.

Reduce Your Risk of Type 2 Diabetes and Metabolic Syndrome

Regular physical activity can reduce your risk of developing type 2 diabetes and metabolic syndrome. Metabolic syndrome is a condition in which you have some combination of too much fat around the waist, high blood pressure, low HDL cholesterol, high triglycerides, or high blood sugar. Research shows that lower rates of these conditions are seen with 120 to 150 minutes (2 hours to 2 hours and 30 minutes) a week of at least moderate-intensity aerobic activity. And the more physical activity you do, the lower your risk will be.

Reduce Your Risk of Some Cancers

Being physically active lowers your risk for two types of cancer: colon and breast. Research shows that:

- Physically active people have a lower risk of colon cancer than do people who are not active.
- Physically active women have a lower risk of breast cancer than do people who are not active.

Reduce your risk of endometrial and lung cancer. Although the research is not yet final, some findings suggest that your risk of endometrial cancer and lung cancer may be lower if you get regular physical activity compared to people who are not active.

Improve your quality of life. If you are a cancer survivor, research shows that getting regular physical activity not only helps give you a better quality of life, but also improves your physical fitness.

Strengthen Your Bones and Muscles

As you age, it's important to protect your bones, joints and muscles. Not only do they support your body and help you move, but keeping bones, joints and muscles healthy can help ensure that you're able to do your daily activities and be physically active. Research shows that doing **aerobics, muscle-strengthening and bone-strengthening physical activity** of at least a moderately-intense level **can slow the loss of bone density** that comes with age.

Hip fracture is a serious health condition that can have life-changing negative effects, especially if you're an older adult. But research shows that people who do 120 to 300 minutes of at least moderate-intensity aerobic activity each week have a lower risk of hip fracture.

Regular physical activity helps with arthritis and other conditions affecting the joints. If you have arthritis, research shows that doing 130 to 150 (2 hours and 10 minutes to 2 hours and 30 minutes) a week of moderate-intensity, low-impact aerobic activity can not only improve your ability to manage pain and do everyday tasks, but it can also make your quality of life better.

Build strong, healthy muscles. Muscle-strengthening activities can help you increase or maintain your muscle mass and strength. Slowly increasing the amount of weight and number of repetitions you do will give you even more benefits, no matter your age.

Improve Your Mental Health and Mood

Regular physical activity can help keep your thinking, learning, and judgment skills sharp as you age. It can also reduce your risk of depression and may help you sleep better. Research has shown that doing aerobics or a mix of aerobic and muscle-strengthening activities 3 to 5 times a week for 30 to 60 minutes can give you these mental health benefits. Some scientific evidence has also shown that even lower levels of physical activity can be beneficial.

Improve Your Ability to do Daily Activities and Prevent Falls

A functional limitation is a loss of the ability to do everyday activities such as climbing stairs, grocery shopping, or playing with your grandchildren.

How does this relate to physical activity? If you're a physically active middle-aged or older adult, you have a lower risk of functional limitations than people who are inactive

Already have trouble doing some of your everyday activities? Aerobic and muscle-strengthening activities can help improve your ability to do these types of tasks.

Are you an older adult who is at risk for falls? Research shows that doing **balance and muscle-strengthening activities** each week along with **moderate-intensity aerobic activity**, like brisk walking, can help reduce your risk of falling.

Increase Your Chances of Living Longer

Science shows that physical activity can reduce your risk of dying early from the leading causes of death, like heart disease and some cancers. This is remarkable in two ways:

1. Only a few lifestyle choices have as large an impact on your health as physical activity. People who are physically active for about 7 hours a week have a 40 percent lower risk of dying early than those who are active for less than 30 minutes a week.
2. You don't have to do high amounts of activity or vigorous-intensity activity to reduce your risk of premature death. You can put yourself at lower risk of dying early by doing at least 150 minutes a week of moderate-intensity aerobic activity.

Everyone can gain the health benefits of physical activity – age, ethnicity, shape or size do not matter.

Here is an example of a workout challenge you can complete at home to help you stay active and healthy, help prevent any new health concerns, or help improve any current health concerns:

31-Day Full Body CHALLENGE

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	5 Pushups 10 Crunches 15 Squats	5 Pushups 12 Crunches 17 Squats	6 Pushups 14 Crunches 19 Squats	Rest	6 Pushups 16 Crunches 20 Squats	7 Pushups 18 Crunches 22 Squats
Rest	7 Pushups 20 Crunches 24 Squats	8 Pushups 22 Crunches 26 Squats	8 Pushups 24 Crunches 28 Squats	Rest	9 Pushups 26 Crunches 30 Squats	9 Pushups 28 Crunches 32 Squats
Rest	10 Pushups 30 Crunches 34 Squats	10 Pushups 32 Crunches 36 Squats	11 Pushups 34 Crunches 38 Squats	Rest	11 Pushups 36 Crunches 40 Squats	12 Pushups 38 Crunches 42 Squats
Rest	12 Pushups 40 Crunches 44 Squats	13 Pushups 42 Crunches 46 Squats	13 Pushups 44 Crunches 48 Squats	Rest	14 Pushups 46 Crunches 50 Squats	14 Pushups 48 Crunches 52 Squats
Rest	15 Pushups 50 Crunches 54 Squats	15 Pushups 52 Crunches 56 Squats	16 Pushups 54 Crunches 58 Squats			

GettinMyHealthyDr

OCTOBER

Substance Abuse

Do you enjoy a glass of wine with dinner, or a beer during a football game? If you're a social drinker, having a drink or two isn't a problem. For others, what starts as social drinking can lead to overuse, abuse and addiction. In fact, about a quarter of Americans over the age of 12 are binge drinkers or heavy drinkers, and 10% abuse illegal and prescription drugs.

Alcohol and your health

Light or moderate drinking may be good for heart health and help lower the risk of stroke or diabetes. But moderate alcohol use is no more than one drink a day for men over 65 and women of all ages, and no more than two a day for men younger than 65. But heavy drinking has risks that outweigh any benefits:

- Health problems. Heavy drinkers have a greater risk of cancer, heart disease, liver disease, high blood pressure, stroke, depression and even sudden death.
- Accidental injuries or death. Drinking too much raises your risk of being seriously hurt or even killed.
- Birth defects. If you are pregnant, drinking can cause brain damage and other serious problems for your baby.

Also, heavy drinking on a regular basis can lead to alcoholism as well as family and work problems.

Do you have a drinking problem?

Ask yourself these questions:

- Does your drinking worry your family or friends?
- Do you ever drink after telling yourself you won't?
- Do you ever forget what you did while you were drinking?
- Do you get headaches or have a hangover after you have been drinking?
- Have you ever gotten into trouble with the police or at home, school or work because of your drinking?

If you answered "yes" to any of these questions, you may have a problem. Talk with your doctor about it.

**Know when to say
"when"**

**A look at alcohol and
drug abuse**

What's a drink?

When it comes to alcohol, one drink might be less than you think.

- Beer: 12 fluid ounces
- Wine: 5 fluid ounces
- Distilled spirits
 - 80 proof: 1.5 fluid ounces
 - 100 proof: 1 fluid ounce

Drugs and your health

Drug use is on the rise in the U.S. About one in ten people 12 and older regularly use prescription drugs or marijuana for recreation, or abuse illegal drugs like heroin, cocaine and crack, or methamphetamine (meth). Illegal drugs and abusing prescription drugs, over-the-counter medicine, or inhaling household chemicals can hurt your brain, heart and other important organs. They all carry the risk of addiction. Some health problems that may come from drug abuse include:

- Heart problems
- Liver problems
- Depression
- Brain damage
- Birth defects
- Memory loss
- Seizures
- Coma

Look for these signs of drug use

- Sudden change in behavior or attitude
- Rapid mood swings, from irritable to happy
- Withdrawal from family members
- Change in friends or hobbies
- Not bathing or taking care of appearance
- Not being able to sleep, or excessive sleepiness during the day
- Red or glassy eyes
- Runny nose
- Sweating a lot
- Eating more or less than usual
- Wanting a lot of privacy
- Being forgetful, not paying attention
- Lying

NOVEMBER

Chronic Conditions

Get the lowdown on diabetes

Here's a closer look at this condition

Diabetes is a condition where the body can't make insulin or can't use it well. Insulin is a hormone that helps our bodies get energy from the glucose in the food we eat. Without it, glucose levels in the blood stream are too high. Over time, this can cause damage to your body tissue and organs. There are three main types of diabetes.



- 1) **Type 1 diabetes** can affect anyone, but most often it develops in children or young adults. People with this type of diabetes produce very little insulin, or none at all.
- 2) **Type 2 diabetes** is the most common type. People with type 2 diabetes either make too little insulin, or their bodies can't use it as they should.
- 3) **Gestational diabetes (GDM)** is a form of diabetes that appears during pregnancy. While GDM usually goes away after pregnancy, it puts women and their babies at higher risk for type 2 diabetes.

Who's more likely to get type 2 diabetes?

Checking some of these boxes puts you at a higher risk.

- I'm overweight
- I'm 60 or older
- I've had diabetes during pregnancy
- I'm African American, Alaska Native, American Indian, Asian American, Hispanic or Pacific Islander American

Need a doctor? We can help!

It's a good idea to talk to your doctor about keeping a healthy weight. To find a doctor, visit **anthem.com** or call us at the number on the back of your member ID card.

Keeping type 2 diabetes at bay

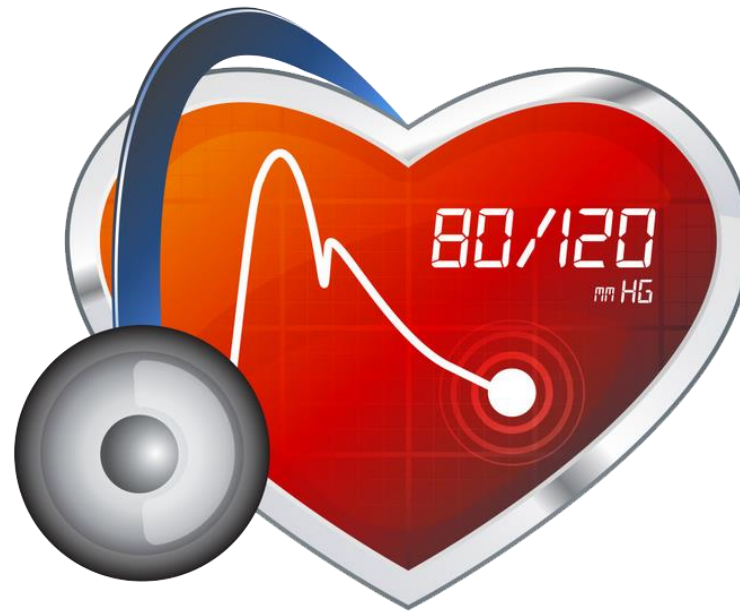
- **Break a sweat.** Exercise for 30 to 60 minutes every day.
- **Get to or stay at a healthy body weight.** Each pound you lose lowers your risk.
- **Catch the right amount of Zzzs.** Make sure you're getting enough rest every night. Sleeping less than six hours or more than nine hours can put you at a higher risk.
- **Make healthy food choices.** Eat more fruits and veggies and pay attention to your portion sizes. Limit foods that are high in sugar, fat or sodium.
- **Kick the habit.** The more cigarettes you smoke, the higher your risk for type 2 diabetes. Quitting smoking can be hard — get help if you need it.
- **Keep an eye on your blood sugar.** If you're concerned about your blood sugar, talk to your doctor about when and how often you should get tested for diabetes. Remember, type 2 diabetes can be prevented and controlled. During your next doctor's visit, talk about your risk factors for a little extra peace of mind.

Find local support and resources

If you're dealing with diabetes, visit the American Diabetes Association website at **diabetes.org**. Check out what's available in your community, like a local support group that can help you learn useful tips

You're in control

You can do a lot to prevent high blood pressure



High blood pressure issues are more common than you may think. About one in three adults in the U.S. has high blood pressure or hypertension. Another one in three has prehypertension — blood pressure that is higher than normal, but not yet in the high range. Learning if you're at risk can help you determine what you can do to help prevent high blood pressure.

What you can do to control your blood pressure

Because high blood pressure is so common, all of us should pay attention to our blood pressure numbers and try to keep them low. Here's how:

- Have your blood pressure checked regularly and know what's normal for you.
- Get to or stay at a healthy weight. ≤ Exercise at least 150 minutes each week.
- Be careful not to eat too much salt — ask your doctor how much sodium is safe for you.
- Don't use tobacco products.
- Avoid saturated fat.
- Limit alcohol.

Helpful resources

Visit the American Heart Association at heart.org for information and tools, including a high blood pressure risk calculator.

How high blood pressure affects your body

Your blood pressure is the force of your blood pushing against the walls of your arteries as your heart pumps it through your body. Over time, if the force is too great, your arteries can harden. Less blood and oxygen pass through hardened arteries. Eventually your heart, brain and other organs can be damaged by the effects of high blood pressure.

Normal blood pressure is below 120/80. This is read as “120 over 80.” The first number is the “systolic” and the second number is the “diastolic.” Even if only one of the numbers is higher than it should be, you could have prehypertension or high blood pressure.

Know your risk

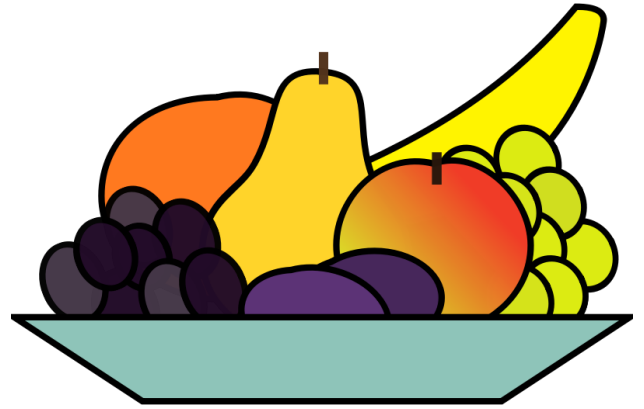
Anyone can get high blood pressure. Most of the time, though, it's found in people who are older than 35. You're also more likely to have high blood pressure if you are:

- African American.
- Pregnant, postmenopausal or taking birth control pills.
- Diabetic.
- Overweight or obese.
- A heavy drinker.
- A tobacco user.
- Eating a diet high in salt or sodium and low in potassium.

High blood pressure can damage your body even if it doesn't cause any symptoms. That's why it is so important to have your blood pressure checked regularly. Talk to your doctor about your risk factors, and whether your blood pressure is healthy. If you're diagnosed with high blood pressure, you may have to take medication. Be sure to follow your doctor's instructions. Ask your doctor before taking any over-the-counter medications or supplements. Also, pay close attention to the ingredients in any over-the-counter cough, cold or flu medicine you take. Decongestants can raise your blood pressure or interfere with blood pressure medications and can be very dangerous for a person with high blood pressure.



Lifestyle changes to combat heart disease



HEALTHY EATING, EXERCISE, QUITTING SMOKING, MANAGING STRESS — they can all have a profound impact on combating heart disease. Making all these a priority may seem overwhelming. But every small positive step you take can help improve your health.

Following a healthy diet — what does that mean?

To lower your risk of heart disease and heart attack, you and your family should follow a diet that is:

- *Low in saturated and trans fats.* Saturated fats are found in some meats, dairy products, chocolate, baked goods, and deep-fried and processed foods. Trans fats can be found in fried and processed foods. Both types of fat raise your low-density lipoprotein (LDL), or “bad,” cholesterol level.
- *High in omega-3 fatty acids.* Found in fish, nut oils such as olive oil and some seafood and plants, omega-3 fatty acids lower your risk of heart attack, in part by helping prevent blood clots.
- *High in fiber.* Fiber is found in whole grains, fruits and vegetables. A fiber-rich diet not only helps lower your LDL cholesterol level, but also provides nutrients that may help protect against heart disease.
- *Low in salt and sugar.* A low-salt diet can help you manage your blood pressure. A low-sugar diet can help you prevent weight gain and control diabetes and pre-diabetes.

Losing 5 to 10% of your current weight can lower your risk of heart disease

Being active doesn't have to mean being an Olympian

You can benefit from as little as 60 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity per week. For major health benefits, every week adults should do at least:

- 150 minutes of aerobic activity
- Two total body strength training workouts

If you smoke, you know you need to stop

Smoking can raise your risk of heart disease and heart attack, and it affects every cell in your body. If you can't stop on your own, talk with your doctor about programs and products that can help you quit, or seek out support groups.

Managing stress can mean managing risk

Unmanaged stress can affect your health. It may cause high blood pressure, irregular heart rhythms, damage to your arteries, higher cholesterol levels, and the development and progression of coronary artery disease. Physical activity, medicine and relaxation therapy can help relieve stress.

A few small steps can have a great big impact on your health — so start now!



DECEMBER

Smoking Cessation

When it comes to smoking, be a quitter

Quitting smoking is the most important thing smokers can do to live a longer, healthier life. Yet almost one in every six American adults smoke.

You're not weak, you're addicted

If you've tried to stop smoking and always seem to pick it up again, you're not alone. Nicotine, the drug in tobacco, is as addictive as heroin or cocaine. The chemicals in tobacco products affect the heart and blood vessels, your hormones, your respiratory system, your metabolism and your brain. And if you are a woman who is pregnant, nicotine affects your baby in the same ways. A smoker who tries to quit faces up to a few weeks of withdrawal. The physical addiction to nicotine is in full force after just a few weeks of smoking. There is also a mental addiction to the habit of smoking.



Making it through the cravings

Between the withdrawal symptoms and the challenge of breaking a habit, it's no wonder many smokers have a hard time quitting. Here are some ways to cope:

Spend time in places where you can't smoke. Try the library, museums, bookstores and malls.

- **Change other habits too.** If you used to smoke when you watched TV, unplug the TV set. If you had to smoke with your morning coffee, have tea instead. If you change your routine, you are less likely to feel something is missing.
- **List your reasons.** Make a list of all your reasons for quitting. Keep copies of it in your wallet, at your desk and on the refrigerator.
- **Don't be fooled.** Remember, there is no such thing as "just one" cigarette or puff. The strong desire to smoke will eventually pass.

- **Stall.** If you feel like you are about to give in, tell yourself you must wait at least ten minutes. This will often be enough time for you to get past the craving.
- **Reward yourself.** Save the money you would have spent on tobacco for a daily treat or a major purchase.

The symptoms of nicotine withdrawal include

- Dizziness (for the first day or two)
- Depression, frustration or anger
- Trouble focusing
- Headache
- Trouble sleeping and bad dreams
- Nausea or hunger

Using e-cigarettes, or vaping, is not a healthy alternative to cigarettes or smokeless tobacco. Vapor from an e-cigarette contains harmful chemicals that can cause cancer, along with other health problems. Vaping around other people exposes them to harmful chemicals as well

Getting help

Between medicines and counseling programs, there is help for people who want to quit.

Getting counseling and support can double your chances of success. Nicotine Anonymous (nicotine-anonymous.org) and smokefree.gov offer support on the phone, via text, online and in person. You can call **800-QUIT-NOW (784-8669)** and **800-ACS-2345 (227-2345)** for toll-free support. Drug treatments can also help. Nicotine replacement therapy gives you nicotine through gums, patches, sprays, lozenges or inhalers, without the other dangerous chemicals in cigarettes. This way you can focus on breaking the habit of smoking before you must go through the physical withdrawal. There are also prescription drugs that help with withdrawal symptoms or change the way your body reacts to nicotine. Your doctor can help you make a plan to kick the habit.

Timeline for withdrawal

Quitting smoking is hard, but worth it! Withdrawal symptoms usually show up within a few hours of the last cigarette. They are at their worst on the second or third day, then they gradually go away over the next couple of weeks. But while you're cranky, tired and depressed, good things are happening to your body.

- **Within minutes:** Your blood pressure drops
- **Within 12 hours:** The level of carbon monoxide in your blood returns to normal.
- **Within a week:** Most of the nicotine has left your body

- **Within three months:** Your circulation and breathing improve
- **One to nine months after quitting:** Coughing and shortness of breath decrease; your lungs regain the ability to clean themselves, reducing your risk of infection
- **One year after quitting:** Your risk of heart disease goes down
- **Five years after quitting:** Your risk of stroke goes down
- **Ten years after quitting:** Your risk of getting cancer of the lung, mouth, throat, esophagus, bladder, cervix and pancreas goes down
- **Fifteen years after quitting:** You have no more risk of heart disease than if you had never smoked.

Crush those

Cravings



Exercise is hard enough without 50 different toxins in your lungs

It's no wonder you don't find many smokers running marathons. But the truth is, exercise is a great way to help you quit smoking. Exercise works because it helps manage energy levels, moods and weight gain.

Research has found that just 10 minutes of exercise reduced cravings for regular smokers. The study also showed that exercise made cigarettes appear less attractive to smokers.

And it's been found that exercise helps smokers with a high risk of relapse because of emotional distress, since exercise can reduce anxiety sensitivity and depressive symptoms.

Start at the right pace

If you just stopped smoking, ease yourself into exercising with low-intensity cardiovascular (also called aerobic) or light strength training (also called weight lifting)

exercises. Starting an exercise program at a high intensity right after you quit smoking could be dangerous.

Start by exercising at a low intensity for short durations. Walking, biking or swimming for 15 to 20 minutes at a time is a good way to increase your cardiovascular endurance after you quit smoking.

Gradually work your way up to moderate-intensity cardiovascular exercises for durations of 30 to 60 minutes at a time. To achieve substantial health benefits, it's advised that adults participate in at least 2 1/2 hours of moderate-intensity aerobic exercises every week and strength-training activities at least two times per week.

Some smokers are afraid of feeling sick without nicotine. But exercise can help here, too by reducing the worst symptoms of smoking withdrawal, such as:

- Irritability
- Depression
- Restlessness
- Difficulty concentrating
- Stress

Cardiovascular, or aerobic, exercises include those that work large muscle groups and get your heart rate up for a sustained period. Strength training or weight lifting exercises improve muscle tone and strength.

Exercise can also lead to better overall health and well-being and can help quitters shed unwanted weight.

Nicotine Dependence

- Most smokers become addicted to nicotine, a drug that is found naturally in tobacco.
- More people in the United States are addicted to nicotine than to any other drug. Research suggests that nicotine may be as addictive as heroin, cocaine, or alcohol.
- Quitting smoking is hard and may require several attempts. People who stop smoking often start again because of withdrawal symptoms, stress, and weight gain.
- Nicotine withdrawal symptoms may include:
 - Feeling irritable, angry, or anxious
 - Having trouble thinking
 - Craving tobacco products
 - Feeling hungrier than usual

Health Benefits to Quitting (according to the CDC)

Tobacco smoke contains a deadly mix of more than 7,000 chemicals; hundreds are harmful, and about 70 can cause cancer. Smoking increases the risk for serious health problems, many diseases, and death.

People who stop smoking greatly reduce their risk for disease and early death. Although the health benefits are greater for people who stop at earlier ages, there are benefits at any age.

You are never too old to quit

Stopping smoking is associated with the following health benefits:

- Lowered risk for lung cancer and many other types of cancer.
- Reduced risk for heart disease, stroke, and peripheral vascular disease (narrowing of the blood vessels outside your heart).
- Reduced heart disease risk within 1 to 2 years of quitting.
- Reduced respiratory symptoms, such as coughing, wheezing, and shortness of breath. While these symptoms may not disappear, they do not continue to progress at the same rate among people who quit compared with those who continue to smoke.
- Reduced risk of developing some lung diseases (such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, also known as COPD, one of the leading causes of death in the United States).
- Reduced risk for infertility in women of childbearing age. Women who stop smoking during pregnancy also reduce their risk of having a low birth weight baby.

Quit-Smoking Aids: Know Your Options

Nicotine Replacement Products

These slowly break your addiction with controlled doses of nicotine. They let you manage your cravings and provide some relief from withdrawal symptoms.

The doses get lower and lower as you take them, so you get used to less and less nicotine before you stop altogether. You may have up to a 70% greater chance of quitting if you use one of these products.

Patch: Placed right on your skin, patches release a small amount of nicotine into your body. They're available over the counter (OTC), which means that you don't need a prescription.

Place a new patch on a different spot on your body every day. You can reuse a spot after a week has passed. It may be more effective to start using the patch a few days before your quit date and to use it along with another nicotine product.

Gum: You chew this OTC product just like regular gum. Your dose depends on how much you smoke. When you feel a tingle in your mouth, stop and put it in your cheek. When the tingling is gone, start chewing again. Do this repeatedly until the tingle is gone – usually after about 30 minutes. For the first 6 weeks, you'll chew one piece every 1 or 2 hours. Treatment should last around 12 weeks.

Lozenge: You take these OTC capsules after meals. They dissolve in your mouth. Your dose depends on how much you smoke. Treatment should take 12 weeks.

Spray: This delivers nicotine through your nose or mouth. Some you can buy over the counter, and for others, you'll need to visit your doctor to get a prescription. Like other nicotine products, you should use it for 12 weeks.

Inhaler: Just like the asthma treatment, you place this cartridge into your mouth and breathe in a puff of nicotine. It's by prescription only, and you'll use it for about 12 weeks.

Prescription Medications

You can only get these medicines with a prescription from your doctor. You'd need to start either drug before your quit date to give it time to build up in your system.

Varenicline (Chantix) is probably the first medicine you'll try if you need a prescription. It works with the part of your brain that reacts to nicotine, so you enjoy smoking less. It also eases withdrawal symptoms. Varenicline is safe to use with nicotine products, and one study shows that a combination of the two may improve your chances of quitting for good. Side effects may include nausea, trouble with sleep, headaches, and vomiting.

Bupropion is an antidepressant that lowers your desire to smoke. You're most likely to get it if varenicline doesn't work or if there's a reason you can't take it. Don't take it with nicotine products unless your doctor tells you to. Common side effects are insomnia, nightmares, and a dry mouth.

Other Methods

Counseling: You can use it as your main method or a support tool. Brief sessions, even as short as 3 minutes, have been shown to help. Programs differ, but in general, they help you pick a quit date, give you techniques to make the change, and teach you how to manage the process and prevent a relapse. Many hospitals and clinics offer solo and group sessions with counselors for free or at a low cost. If that isn't an option, every state has a quit-smoking hotline you can call.

Hypnosis: A trained hypnotherapist will place you into trance-like state. He'll then make suggestions that will help you get rid of the urge to smoke. Doctors still don't know how effective this method is or if it works at all. Some studies say that it works better than using nicotine products, while others say there's no benefit.

Apps and online support groups: Do some research and find one that meets your needs, so that you're more likely to stick with the program.

Acupuncture: This might work if you've had side effects from other quitting methods. A trained practitioner uses thin metal needles to stimulate pressure points on your body. Spots on your ears seem to boost brain chemicals that help curb your desire to smoke. Studies haven't confirmed that it works for this purpose. You'll need several sessions, and you'll want to check on whether your insurance covers it, unless you're OK paying for it out of your own pocket.

Laser therapy: This works like acupuncture, but instead of needles, it uses low-level lasers that won't hurt your skin. Studies haven't confirmed that it works.

